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Summary record of the 301st meeting
Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 22 March 2017, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Tatić (Vice-Chair)

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In the absence of the Chair, Mr. Pulido, Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by parties to the Convention under article 35 *(continued)*

Initial report of the Republic of Moldova (continued) (CRPD/C/MDA/1; CRPD/C/MDA/Q/1 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of the Republic of Moldova took places at the Committee table.*

Articles 1–20

2. **Ms. Ocreteală** (Republic of Moldova), responding to questions from Committee members, said that article 11 of the Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities Act No. 60 (Social Inclusion Act) addressed the issue of public awareness. The State was required to promote a positive image and a socially active role for persons with disabilities, and organized regular public awareness campaigns, seminars and conferences with that end in view. The most recent campaign had been organized jointly by civil society associations and the public authorities in February 2017. A major national conference on inclusive education rights and best practices for the development of social services would be organized in partnership with civil society in late March 2017.

3. The Film Festival on Human Rights, which was organized with the support of United Nations agencies and development partners, also raised awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities. Access to films concerning persons with disabilities was free of charge. Other activities included exhibitions of photographs taken by persons with disabilities, as well as press conferences, round tables and workshops on subjects aimed at promoting their rights and social inclusion.

4. Members of the Government held monthly meetings with local authorities and the general public to promote the policy framework governing the rights of persons with disabilities. All such public awareness-raising activities were covered by the mass media. The new National Programme on Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities for the period 2017-2022 would include awareness-raising activities, such as campaigns organized by central and local public authorities with civil society associations. Action would also be taken to assess changes in opinion regarding persons with disabilities, and media professionals would be trained to promote their rights and to alert the public to the policy framework.

5. A telephone hotline was already accessible to persons with intellectual disabilities and persons who were hard of hearing. They were provided with a mobile phone and were trained to use it in order to send messages when they required support.

6. **Ms. Cernei** (Republic of Moldova) said that the Programme for the Development of Inclusive Education for the period 2011-2020 provided for the education of children with sensory impairments and severe disabilities. Recommendations would shortly be made on the development of high-quality and inclusive education for such children, based on a cross-cutting approach. Action was being taken to guarantee the accessibility of primary and secondary educational facilities. A website on inclusive education run by the Republican Centre for Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance contained useful information about the education of children with special needs and relevant educational materials, and provided guidelines for teachers. The website was also accessible for persons with sensory impairments.

7. In line with international treaties and national strategic documents, the Ministry of Education was introducing new mechanisms for inclusive education at all levels. The regulatory and legal instruments contained no provisions that discriminated against persons with disabilities. On the contrary, special provision was made for their access to education and vocational training.

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8. During the period from 2010 to 2016, persons with disabilities enrolled in the first cycle of higher education had included 585 students with severe disabilities, and some 290 students with diverse impairments were currently enrolled in higher education institutions. During the 2015/16 academic year, technical and vocational education facilities had been provided for 393 students with special needs, including 89 with severe disabilities and 210 with moderate disabilities. They had attended courses in areas such as health, commerce, protection of the environment, information and communication technology, and engineering.

9. During the period from 2012 to 2016, 14 establishments, including 13 universities and the Institute of Pedagogical Sciences, had provided training in inclusive education for some 11,800 students at various levels of higher education. Persons with disabilities were enrolled in 17 out of a total of 31 higher education institutions. The most popular areas of study were medicine, law, public administration, and information and communication technology.

10. Higher educational establishments had taken a number of steps to support students with disabilities, such as individual training for persons who needed to study at home; study grants and material support; accessibility measures; and medical assistance for students in university clinics. However, such measures were insufficient to guarantee full and equal access for young people with disabilities to higher education, as required by the Convention. Specific action was therefore being taken in the 2016/17 academic year to remedy the situation.

11. **Ms. Osovetă** (Republic of Moldova) said that university resource centres employed teachers with disabilities for the provision of services in order to encourage students with disabilities to play an active part in the education system.

12. **Mr. Cazacu** (Republic of Moldova) said that, with a view to monitoring compliance with the Social Inclusion Act, the Minister of Regional Development and Construction had issued Order No. 67 in 2016 concerning the establishment of a working group to monitor the enforcement of legislation relating to construction by local administrative authorities. The working group had developed information and inspection activities regarding compliance with the provisions of regulatory documents applicable to the issuance of urban planning certificates for design and construction permits. A total of 98 localities had been inspected. The working group had identified irregularities in procedures for the preparation of project documentation and failures in meeting special requirements to facilitate access for persons with disabilities in about 38 per cent of the documents that it examined.

13. In 2016, the Ministry had participated in seven thematic seminars and two round tables organized by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and attended by representatives of local public administrations, designers, architects and representatives of associations of persons with disabilities. The Ministry had also engaged in an interactive dialogue in two television shows. Great importance was attached to teamwork and consultations between the Ministry and NGOs representing the interests of persons with disabilities.

14. An important component of the action plan for the implementation of the National Programme on Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities for the period 2017-2022 was the completion of a study on the development of a curriculum for architectural studies in higher educational establishments that included accessibility and reasonable accommodation. A draft town-planning and construction code, which had been approved on its first reading in Parliament, provided for the inclusion of representatives of persons with disabilities in the membership of relevant commissions. Representatives of persons with disabilities were also included in technical committees that monitored the process of elaboration of regulatory documents concerning accessibility and reasonable accommodation. Four regulatory documents applicable to the construction industry were currently being finalized.

15. Construction design standards that met general security and accessibility requirements for persons with disabilities had been issued in 2014. Assistive products were provided for blind and visually impaired persons, such as tactile walking surface indicators and audio signals in public spaces. Some buildings constructed in the previous century

presented a major challenge. Action was being taken in collaboration with local authorities to align them with modern regulations and requirements.

16. The Digital Moldova 2020 strategy contained provisions concerning accessibility for persons with disabilities with a view to providing accessible content in different formats. The amendments to the Electronic Communications Act, which were currently being discussed in Parliament, provided for access to a broad range of services for persons with disabilities.

17. **Mr. Cîrlan** (Republic of Moldova) said that 317 judges and 19 assistants had received training in the rights of persons with disabilities during the first three months of 2016 at the National Institute of Justice. Training courses had also been provided for staff of the Community Mental Health Centre, police officers and prosecutors. According to the Institute, persons with disabilities had participated in the training course for judges.

18. Communication procedures during preliminary criminal investigations were based on provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure concerning respect for human rights and dignity and on article 6 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms concerning the right to a fair trial. The investigating authorities were required to ensure that persons with communication difficulties were able to exercise their rights in criminal proceedings by providing them with appropriate facilities, in accordance with article 105 (4) of the Code of Criminal Procedure. In 2014, the Government had adopted Decision No. 333 on sign language interpreters.

19. Persons who had been granted social welfare benefits during the previous six months, including persons with disabilities, were entitled to free legal assistance, regardless of their income. Act No. 198 of 2007 also guaranteed free and equal access to legal assistance for all persons declared without legal capacity or with limited legal capacity, who had no legal representative or no known domicile. Persons hospitalized in psychiatric institutions were entitled to assistance if they had no access to a lawyer.

20. With regard to access to justice, Constitutional Court Judgment No. 33 of 2016 had repealed several provisions of the Code of Civil Procedure in order to facilitate the exercise of procedural rights. When hearing testimony, judges assessed whether the requirements of article 133 of the Code were met, namely whether persons with disabilities were capable of fully understanding the facts and of testifying truthfully. In criminal proceedings, persons with disabilities could testify through an interpreter and, if necessary, in the presence of a physician, pursuant to article 105 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

21. With regard to legal responsibility in the event of lack of reasonable accommodation, article 179 of the Criminal Code addressed the issue of legal responsibility for any form of exclusion, restriction, distinction or preference based on disability. Relevant provisions were also contained in article 306 concerning the imposition of criminal liability on a person known to be innocent, article 307 on the deliberate handing down of a judgment or other ruling that was contrary to the law and article 308 on illegal detention or arrest. Bill No. 301 of 1 July 2016, which was currently before Parliament, proposed the incorporation in a number of articles of aggravating circumstances pertaining to prejudice, disdain or hatred based, inter alia, on disability.

22. With regard to the repeal of article 24 of the Civil Code, bill No. 292 provided for the amendment of civil legal capacity by allowing for assistance in decision-making. The same bill amended the procedure for hospitalization by requiring the consent of persons with disabilities. In cases where they were unable to express their will, provision could be made for assistance in decision-making.

23. All new court construction projects were required to include provisions for accessibility.

24. The imposition of forced labour as a penalty during the probation period following a suspended sentence was prohibited in the case of persons with disabilities by article 190 of the Enforcement Code and article 77 of the Criminal Code.

25. In 2015 and 2016, the legal authorities had ruled that only 344 persons lacked legal capacity.

26. There were no judges with disabilities, but disability was not considered to be an impediment to access to the profession. There were two prosecutors with mobility impairments.

27. The Republic of Moldova had 503 certified interpreters, 17 of whom used sign language and 15 of whom were persons with disabilities. Eight sign language interpreters had provided services in 185 cases in 2015 and in 234 cases in 2016.

28. **Ms. Iaşan** (Republic of Moldova) said that the Ministry of Health provided all citizens with access to medical services. With a view to ensuring unimpeded access to State medical institutions, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council for Health had issued criteria governing access for patients with limited mobility. The State was required to ensure access to high-quality services and to prohibit coercive medical treatment.

29. The legislation concerning patients with intellectual disabilities had been amended and a series of reforms had been implemented. The number of beds in psychiatric institutions had been increased from 2,800 in 2010 to 4,400. Forty-one community centres for mental health had been established. They adopted a multidisciplinary approach involving family doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists and physiotherapists. Patients received subsidized medication through family doctors free of charge on a monthly basis. A pilot project in four regions was currently providing training for 450 family doctors and 1,500 nurses who would provide services in the community centres.

30. Under the national programme for patients who were hard of hearing, the State delivered about 800 hearing aids each year, giving priority to children. Patients could send text messages via the emergency 112 telephone line, for instance in order to call an ambulance. Persons who were hard of hearing had previously been denied drivers' licences. They could now be trained and obtain a licence.

31. Pursuant to an interministerial ordinance issued in 2013, all physicians were required to report cases of torture or physical abuse by medical personnel to a public prosecutor. No such cases had been reported in recent years.

32. Coercive termination of pregnancy was prohibited. The National Strategy on Reproductive Health guaranteed women's right to decide freely on pregnancy and all women had access to contraceptives. According to the relevant legislation, adults had the right to family planning and family health and to choose the number of children they wished to have. Youth-friendly health centres provided young people with information on reproductive health and safe abortions.

33. **Mr. Cîrlan** (Republic of Moldova) said that most judicial authorities had taken steps to make their buildings accessible to persons with disabilities. Act No. 76 of 2016 on the reorganization of the judicial system served as the basis for action to construct new judicial buildings. With a view to its implementation, a plan aimed at providing the best possible conditions for the functioning of the judiciary had been adopted. It was hoped to complete all construction work by 2027. The new buildings would take into account the needs of persons with disabilities, bearing in mind applicable national guidelines and international standards.

34. **Mr. Cușcă** (Republic of Moldova) said that the authorized sign language interpreters had worked for a total of 1,180 hours in 2014, the year in which the service had been introduced, and for 4,627 hours in 2016. There were also a number of self-trained interpreters, who were usually members of families of persons with disabilities. The Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and the Family and the Ministry of Education planned to introduce additional training courses for interpreters.

35. The Social Services Act No. 123 of 2010 sought to guarantee independent living conditions, including for persons with disabilities. Guidelines and minimum quality standards for diverse social services had been issued in the intervening period. The services for persons with disabilities included community homes, protected housing, mobile teams, personal assistance teams and the Respiro care service. In 2013, a total of 1,367 persons had received personal assistance. By 2016, the number had increased to about 2,300.

36. With regard to institutionalization, the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and the Family ran four residential institutions: two psychiatric hospitals and two facilities for children with psychological problems. There were roughly 2,000 beneficiaries, of whom about 200 were children. The Minister had set up working groups to review all files of persons requesting assistance. NGOs were also actively involved. Most requests were declined, but, where the circumstances of the persons with disabilities might represent a threat to society, assistance could be provided through community homes.

37. The existing moratorium on institutionalization did not cover all cases. However, the data showed that progress was being made towards deinstitutionalization. There had been 14 cases of deinstitutionalization of adults and 12 of children in 2015. The corresponding figures for 2016 were 11 adults and 26 children. The plan to convert residential institutions would enable them to provide community services. Four facilities in different localities were being refurbished and would shortly provide social services for residents, who were entitled to work if they so wished. Children could attend school and become involved in community centres at the local level. Hence they were not isolated and could be fully integrated into society. The Ministry would work on deinstitutionalization with local authorities, providing them with the requisite financial support to make social services available to deinstitutionalized persons.

38. In 2016, the Ministry had developed curricula and training courses for personal assistants. An agency for social protection created under the auspices of the Ministry focused on vocational training for social protection specialists.

39. **Ms. Ocreteală** (Republic of Moldova) said that the Government would give priority to deinstitutionalization and would develop a national programme in cooperation with development partners and civil society.

Articles 21-33

40. **Mr. Ishikawa** enquired about the coverage of the issue of disability by the National Council for Coordinating Sustainable Development, since he was unaware that disability formed part of the Sustainable Development Goals.

41. He was pleased to note that the Government and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) had agreed in 2016 on a project for the deinstitutionalization of children with disabilities.

42. According to the State party's report (CRPD/C/MDA/1), the National Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was tasked with monitoring the implementation of the national policy on the social inclusion of persons with disabilities. He wished to know how many members of the National Council were persons with disabilities and, in particular, whether they included persons with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities.

43. **Mr. Martin** said that he wished to know whether the awareness-raising activities being conducted in the State party were being led by trainers who were themselves persons with disabilities. He also wondered whether provision had been made to ensure that public information was produced in easy-to-read formats for persons with intellectual disabilities and, if so, what type of information was available. Moreover, how did the State party ensure that such information was reaching the people who needed it?

44. **Mr. Kabue**, referring to paragraph 152 of the report, in which it was stated that persons with "severe locomotor" disabilities could buy vehicles from abroad free of import duties, said that it would be helpful to know how the term "severe" had been defined and how it was determined whether a person met that criterion. Regarding article 21 of the Convention, he would welcome updated information on the progress made in ensuring that public websites, as well as those of private entities and the mass media, were accessible for persons with disabilities, in particular for persons with visual impairments.

45. He invited the delegation to comment on reports indicating that, although a number of special education schools had been closed, the focus seemed instead to have shifted towards establishing separate special classes within mainstream schools, which, if true, still amounted to segregated, not inclusive, education.

46. Regarding employment, he would welcome information on the extent to which the 5 per cent employment quota for persons with disabilities had been successful. Information should also be provided on reports received by the Committee that persons with disabilities experienced high rates of unemployment and that those living in institutions were forced to work for members of staff of those institutions in conditions that were, in some cases, tantamount to slave labour. Details of the eligibility requirements for disability pensions would also be helpful. In particular, he wondered whether they were paid to all persons with disabilities, irrespective of whether or not they had ever been employed.

47. **Mr. Basharu** said that he wished to know what steps had been taken to ensure that persons with disabilities, in particular blind persons and persons with motor disabilities, had access to high-quality, affordable assistive devices and to training in mobility skills. Regarding article 21 of the Convention, he would be interested to know what measures were in place to guarantee access by persons with disabilities to information in the media, through the provision of sign language interpretation, for example.

48. He would welcome updated information on what steps had been taken to ensure access for persons with disabilities to health services; what measures were in place, including sign language interpretation, to help deaf persons seeking health-care services; what efforts had been made to ensure that women and girls with disabilities were provided with information regarding their sexual and reproductive rights; and what training had been provided to health-care professionals to raise awareness of the penalties for the abuse or ill-treatment of persons with disabilities. Lastly, he wished to know what specific concrete measures had been taken with regard to reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities in the area of employment and whether the necessary mechanisms and focal points were in place to monitor and ensure full implementation of the Convention.

49. **Mr. Rukhledev** said that he wished to know what measures had been taken to ensure that persons with disabilities were able to participate in elections on an equal footing with all other citizens, including in rural areas. He wondered whether polling booths were accessible for persons with disabilities, what arrangements were made for persons who were physically unable to go and vote, and whether election campaign and voting materials were accessible, with the provision of sign language interpretation, captioning and easy-to-read formats. Lastly, he asked whether organizations of persons with disabilities were involved in programmes and decision-making at the municipal levels and whether any persons with disabilities were members of Parliament or representatives of political parties.

50. **Mr. Kim** Hyung Shik, referring to paragraph 235 of the report, said that the meaning of the term "specialized enterprises" needed clarification. In particular, he wished to know whether those enterprises were akin to regular employment or were variations on sheltered workshops. He was concerned that not enough effort seemed to have been made to help people with disabilities gain employment in the open labour market and that no information had been provided on the number of persons with disabilities employed in the public sector. In that connection, he wondered what the average income was for persons with disabilities and how long they typically remained in the same role. Lastly, he asked to what extent persons with disabilities and their representative organizations were involved in designing, implementing and monitoring international cooperation projects and how the State party intended to involve organizations of persons with disabilities in activities aimed at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular with respect to the indicators related to persons with disabilities.

51. **Mr. Lovászy** said that he would be interested to hear more about the availability of early recognition services in the State party and the eligibility criteria for such services. In particular, he wished to know whether they were provided to all parents of children with disabilities, and to the children themselves from preschool age, in order to prepare them for entry into the inclusive education system and, later, into the open labour market. Teachers should also receive suitable and adequate training.

52. He wished to know what specific procedures were in place in the State party for registering qualified sign language interpreters; what mechanisms were used to ensure that sign language services were of the highest quality; and whether information could be provided on the proportion of sign language users who had used those services and the

number of hours of signing they had received. In that connection, he wondered whether there was scope for offering distance sign language or captioning services by means of modern assistive technologies, since, in general, there were many more hard-of-hearing persons than there were deaf persons.

53. **Mr. Parra Dussan** said that he would welcome clarification on whether special education schools were still operating as such in the State party and, if so, to what extent they were used in comparison with inclusive education schools. Regarding employment, he asked what proportion of persons with disabilities were working in the open labour market rather than in reserved employment, which was often poorly paid compared to regular employment.

54. **Mr. Pyaneandee** said that he wished to know how the State party was faring in developing school curricula on a continuous basis, providing training for support teachers working in inclusive classes, monitoring accessibility in schools and ensuring that specific budget provision was made to support the transition to inclusive education. Those were considered to be the basic requirements for full implementation of article 24 of the Convention, on education, in line with general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education.

55. He was concerned that the State party's monitoring mechanism, as provided for under article 33 of the Convention, lacked independence. He wondered what action had been taken or was envisaged to strengthen that mechanism so as to adequately deal with complaints; whether there were plans to ensure that that mechanism was in line with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles); and whether any information could be provided on the number of complaints, and their outcomes, that had so far been filed by persons with disabilities.

56. **Mr. You** Liang said that he would welcome information on the number of persons with disabilities employed in government departments and on how, and to what extent, the State party offered early intervention and for children with disabilities, in particular those aged 6 years and under. He would also be grateful for data disaggregated by gender and by the real needs of persons with disabilities in the State party, since such information was necessary in order to be able to provide tailored services. Lastly, he asked whether public sports facilities were accessible for persons with disabilities and why Paralympian athletes received awards that were much lower than those of their Olympian counterparts.

57. **Mr. Buntan** said that he wished to know to what extent the State party's special education schools were being repurposed to offer integrated support for the inclusive education system and whether the Government had any immediate plans to ratify and implement the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled. He would also be interested to know whether, and, if so, how, the Government intended to link its implementation of the Convention with that of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular with regard to the indicators of the Goals that were relevant to persons with disabilities.

58. **Mr. Chaker** said that he would welcome clarification on the legal working age in the Republic of Moldova, since the figures cited in paragraph 135 of the State party's replies to the list of issues (CRPD/C/MDA/Q/1/Add.1) suggested that persons with disabilities were working at 15 years of age, when they would be better off in school. He also wished to know whether sufficient funding was available to enable employers to carry out workplace adaptations, with a view to enabling persons with disabilities to work more easily and widely in the open labour market.

59. **Mr. Ruskus** (Country Rapporteur) said that he wished to know whether there were any immediate plans to repeal the Mental Health Act, which contained provisions allowing persons with psychosocial disabilities to be hospitalized without their freely given consent. He would also welcome information on the purpose of the two single-sex segregated schools for children with psychosocial disabilities. Lastly, he was concerned at reports that seemed to suggest that new legislation on pensions, which increased the amount of work experience required in order to receive a pension, would, in all likelihood, push more

persons with disabilities into extreme poverty by forcing them to survive solely on social allowances, which alone were not sufficient for an adequate standard of living.

60. **Ms. Degener** asked whether the delegation had data on the rates of inclusion and exclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream education. It was often the case that exclusion rates, which covered children in special education schools, special education classes in mainstream education and in home schooling, did not necessarily decrease in line with increases in inclusion rates.

61. **The Chair** said that he would welcome information on the accessibility of tourist sites and cultural venues for persons with disabilities.

The meeting was suspended at noon and resumed at 12.20 p.m.

62. **Ms. Cernei** (Republic of Moldova) said that the Government had made inclusive education a priority, and that was borne out by the closure of many of the country's segregated schools. By way of example, the number of residential institutions, or *internats*, for children with disabilities had decreased significantly — from 68 in 2007 to 8 in 2017 — and so, therefore, had the number of children in such institutions. There were also currently 14 special education schools in the Republic of Moldova, where 1,025 children with psychosocial disabilities or sensory impairments were receiving their education. Since ratifying the Convention, the Government had created the legal framework to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities, which included the right to inclusive education, from preschool level upwards. Moreover, of the more than 300,000 schoolchildren in pre-university mainstream education, almost 10,000 were children with disabilities.

63. Under the Programme for the Development of Inclusive Education for the period 2011-2020, the Government aimed to promote inclusive education and ensure that children, young people and adults with disabilities were not marginalized or isolated. The overall goal was to provide an accessible educational environment that was able to respond to the needs of students through the provision of a minimum package of support; to identify and allocate appropriate funding for that purpose; and, at the same time, to foster an open, more inclusive society. To that end, and as part of the reform of the *internats*, financial resources had been redirected to enable schools to provide the necessary support services for inclusive education. Municipal and local authorities were also providing psychological support and educational support staff. Some 800 resource centres for inclusive education had also been established around the country.

64. Up to 2 per cent of the regional education budget was now allocated to providing methodological support to facilitate the inclusion of children with disabilities. Individualized learning plans had been introduced for children with disabilities, as had guidelines for schools on how to adapt educational programmes to enable such children to be included. Comprehensive and ongoing assessments of children with disabilities were carried out by the municipal authorities, with the involvement of parents and under the supervision of the Republican Centre for Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance, in order to ensure their continued development. Interdisciplinary school commissions had also been set up with a view to, inter alia, providing schools with specialist support for children with disabilities, identifying the types of assistance required by individual children, training support staff and providing resource centres with the necessary facilities and equipment to ensure inclusive education. A range of experts, including head teachers, local authority officials, support staff and other professionals were working in conjunction with UNICEF and NGOs to promote and further expand the inclusive education system by transforming former residential schools. Various other initiatives to improve education in the Republic of Moldova were also under way. By way of example, a project supported by the World Bank involved adapting 21 local schools and ensuring that children with disabilities in mainstream schools received the required quality of education. Similarly, a UNICEF-backed programme included capacity-building for teachers teaching children with disabilities and measures to ensure that the local schools involved were fully accessible. The concept of inclusive education was also to be updated to take into account the educational needs of individual children.

65. **Ms. Iaşan** (Republic of Moldova) said that the Ministry of Health had introduced a raft of new measures in relation to sexual and reproductive health, including the National

Strategy on Reproductive Health. As part of those measures, girls and women could now gain access to gynaecology and midwifery services through their local doctor. Advice on sexual and reproductive health was available in all doctors' surgeries and doctors were notified of reproductive and sexual health violations and other issues.

66. A decree had been adopted in 2016 to ensure that all babies born in the Republic of Moldova could be seen by a paediatrician and neuropathologist, who, in the event that any issues were detected, would refer them to a specialist for diagnosis and further treatment, if necessary. Several rehabilitation centres were located around the country and were also accessible with a referral from a family doctor. Lastly, discussions were under way in Parliament on repealing the discriminatory provision of the Mental Health Act that allowed for patients to be hospitalized without their consent.

67. **Mr. Cușcă** (Republic of Moldova), replying to a question raised by Mr. Ishikawa, said that while persons with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities were not currently represented on the National Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, its members did include representatives of various NGOs and organizations of persons with disabilities.

68. Independent monitoring was carried out by the Ombudsman's Office as well as by NGOs. The Attorney General was also responsible for monitoring activities, in cooperation with a group of experts from NGOs.

69. By law, persons with disabilities who were able to work were entitled to seek employment in the open labour market, in specialized enterprises or in home-based jobs. Specialized enterprises were run by social organizations, which received State subsidies to help them pay for any required materials, free of value-added tax, and to make the social insurance contributions on behalf of the employee. There were only 11 such enterprises, employing around 250 persons with disabilities, since the majority of persons with disabilities worked in the regular labour market or, in some cases, in the informal sector. In that connection, a national programme had been launched to combat informal employment in general.

70. Employers with 20 or more employees were legally required to ensure that persons with disabilities made up 5 per cent of their workforce and to make reasonable accommodation for them. A new bill on employment contained provision for a State subsidy to be awarded to employers who met the quota and who made the necessary workplace adaptations. There was no discrimination with regard to rates of pay for persons with disabilities in comparison with non-disabled persons. Wages were paid in accordance with the legislation and, in fact, persons with disabilities had a slight advantage, since they had the right to work six hours per day but to be paid for eight hours.

71. The legal working age in the Republic of Moldova was 16 years, provided that the individual concerned and their parents gave their consent; otherwise, it was 18 years. The statistics included in the replies to the list of issues were obtained from a study carried out by the National Bureau of Statistics on the situation of families in the Republic of Moldova. The data, therefore, probably included unofficial labour, such as household work, which would explain why it referred to workers as young as 15 years of age.

72. The Government had drawn on the experience of other countries and recommendations from international experts with regard to its pension reforms. Persons with disabilities who were not entitled to receive a pension because they did not have the required amount of work history were entitled to a range of other social protection payments, such as retirement pensions, mobility allowances and social benefits.

73. Lastly, regarding education, the Government intended to phase out all the *internats*, or residential schools for children with disabilities, and turn them into centres providing community-based services.

74. **Ms. Oceretnîi** (Republic of Moldova) said that the comments and recommendations of the members of the Committee, as well as those of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, Ms. Devandas Aguilar, would be taken into account by the Government as it strove to ensure the rights and social inclusion of persons with disabilities. Government efforts were, and would continue to be, based on the principles of the Convention. The main development to date had been the introduction of the National

Programme on Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities for the period 2017-2022, which covered the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities and provision for social protection, health care and employment, among other areas. The Government was committed to working closely with organizations of persons with disabilities to develop legal frameworks and policies that reflected their views and needs.

75. **The Chair** said that the delegation could provide written replies, within 24 hours, to the remaining unanswered questions.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.